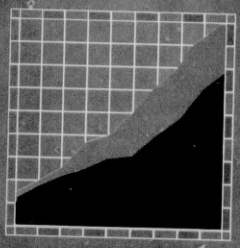
Australian Bureau of Statistics

Statistics Weekly



Thursday, 24 October 1991

The week in statistics ...

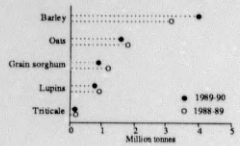
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W. McLENNAN
Acting Australian Statistician

ABS Catalogue No. 1316.0

Crop production fell before the drought took hold

SELECTED COARSE GRAINS PRODUCTION



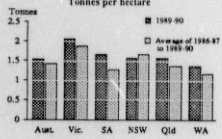
The production of many major crops declined in the 1989-90 season. The exceptions were wheat, barley, rice and cotton. Crops which decreased significantly were oats (11%), grain sorghum (24%) and triticale (18%).

Production of our major crop, wheat, increased from 13,935 tonnes in 1988-89 to 14,214 tonnes in 1989-90, with the average yield rising slightly to 1.6 tonnes per hectare and bigger areas planted in all wheat producing States except New South Wales.

The area planted to all crops fell in both New South Wales and Queensland, by 11 per cent and 9 per cent respectively, with plantings of oats, triticale, grain sorghum and oil seeds all down. Plantings of rice in New South Wales, and wheat in Queensland increased on 1988-89.

Total oil seed plantings decreased by 43 per cent and production dropped by 36 per cent. This was mainly due to small decreases in safflower, soybean and sunflower plantings in all States combined with a large decrease in sunflower planting in Queensland (77%).

WHEAT YIELD
Tonnes per hectare



The total area planted with vegetables for human consumption increased by 6 per cent in 1989-90 with potatoes, tomatoes and pumpkins recording some of the more significant increases. Vegetables which increased in terms of production are highlighted in the table below.

PRODUCTION OF SELECTED VEGETABLES, 1989-90

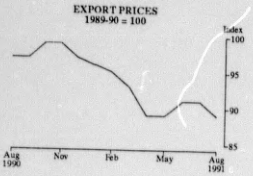
	Production in tonnes	*Change from 1988-89 percent*
Water melon	59,124	14.1
Pumpkins	82,973	13.2
Capsicum	18,888	12.8
Potatoes	1,177,877	12.4
Cauliflower	88,603	11.3
Mushrooms	21,534	9.4
Tomatoes	322,060	1.1

Among other features of 1989-90 crops, citrus fruit production rose by 19 per cent. *Summary of Crops, 1989-90* also provides data on fertiliser usage, irrigation methods and nursery operations.

PRODUCTION OF CITRUS FRUIT, 1989-90

	Production in tonnes	*Change from 1988-89 percent*
Oranges	487,177	22.0
Mandarins	40,394	11.4
Grapefruit	30,474	4.2
Lemons and limes	36,001	3.5
Total	*594,046*	*18.9*

For further information, order the publication Summary of Crops, Australia *(7330.0), or contact Mark Patton on (06) 252 5341.*



Export prices turn down again

Export prices fell by a large 2.2 per cent between July and August 1991.

Price falls were recorded for a wide range of items, caused mainly by lower world commodity prices and an increase in the value of the dollar against major trading currencies.

The main price falls in August were for gold, coal and petroleum products.

On an annual basis, export prices fell by 8.2 per cent between August 1990 and August 1991. Since exports by value have been running at record levels in recent months, this decline in the index serves to demonstrate an even more dramatic improvement in the volume of Australia's exports over the 12 months to August.

The wide range of price changes for different commodities is shown below.

EXPORT PRICES, AUGUST 1991
Percentage change

Commodity	*From previous month*	*From corresponding month of previous year*
Motor vehicles, aircraft and vessels	0.0	1.0
Live animals and animal products	−2.1	−1.0
Mineral products	−2.9	−4.7
Machinery and appliances	0.0	−5.1
Products of chemicals or allied industries	−1.1	−8.9
Gold, diamonds and coin	−8.2	−9.2
Base metals	−1.2	−12.6
Vegetable products	0.0	−13.6
Wool and cotton fibres	0.0	−15.5
Prepared food stuffs	0.0	−16.5
All exports	−2.2	−8.2

For further information, order the publication Export Price Index, Australia *(6405.0), or contact Peter Cordy on (06) 252 5541.*

Engineering construction in brief ...

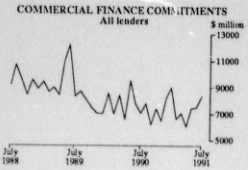
Expressed at average 1984-85 prices, seasonally adjusted, the value of engineering construction work done during the June quarter 1991 was $2,016.7 million, an increase of 3.8 per cent over the March quarter 1991 estimate of $1,942.6 million. Work done for the public sector and private sector rose by 2.6 per cent and 7.1 per cent respectively.

The most significant increases in the private sector occurred in the roads, highways and subdivisions, and heavy industry categories.

Work done for the public sector by the private sector increased by 4.4 per cent while the value of work done by the public sector's own workforce increased by 1.8 per cent.

Source: Engineering Construction Activity, Australia, June Quarter 1991 (8762.0).

Business finance increases to highest level for 6 months ...



Business finance commitments (i.e. commercial finance commitments plus lease finance commitments) increased by 11 per cent in July 1991 compared with June 1991, reaching the highest monthly level since January 1991.

Commercial fixed loan commitments were up by $580 million (20%) in July compared with June. New commitments under revolving credit facilities were up by $276 million (6%). The manufacturing sector was the main contributor to the net increases in both lending categories, up $145 million (108%) and $507 million (77%) respectively.

There was a sharp 148 per cent rise in revolving credit commitments to the mining industry, and a 38 per cent increase in fixed loan commitments to the rural industries (agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting). Note however that all those figures partly reflect the fact that July 1991 was a five week reporting period for some banks.

COMMERCIAL FINANCE COMMITMENTS, JULY 1991
$ million

	Banks	*Finance companies*	*Money market corporations*	*Other lenders*	*All lenders*
Fixed loan	2,745	477	69	190	3,480
Revolving credit	4,063	43	753	2	4,862
Total commitments	*6,808*	*520*	*822*	*192*	*8,342*



The value of goods under new lease finance commitments (excluding leveraged leases) increased by $42 million (10%) in July 1991 compared with June 1991. Again it was the manufacturing sector that was the major contributor to the net increase, up $62 million (177%).

NEW LEASE FINANCE COMMITMENTS, JULY 1991
$ million

	Banks	*Money market corporations*	*Finance companies*	*General financiers*	*All lessors*
Motor vehicles	40	6	197	2	245
Other transport equipment	10	0	5	0	14
Construction equipment	2	2	15	0	19
Manufacturing equipment	2	1	4	0	8
Agricultural equipment	3	1	7	0	12
Electronic data processing equipment and office machines	27	3	16	21	67
Other	66	2	29	2	98
Total commitments	*150*	*15*	*273*	*25*	*463*

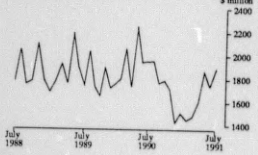
Continued ...

... as consumer finance also rises

Consumer finance (housing finance plus personal finance) for July 1991 increased by 15 per cent over June 1991.

As reported in the *Statistics Weekly* of 10 October 1991, housing finance (including alterations and additions) was up $418 million (20%) in July 1991 compared with June. The July total of $2529 million was the highest monthly total since the series began in the mid-1970's.

PERSONAL FINANCE COMMITMENTS



Personal finance commitments for July 1991 increased by 9 per cent over June 1991 and were at their highest level since August 1990.

Fixed loan commitments were up by $173 million (16%) on June although this was offset to some extent by a decline in new commitments under revolving credit of $23 million (4%).

Loans for motor vehicles accounted for 37 per cent of total fixed loan commitments and secured commitments (e.g. mortgage backed overdrafts) accounted for 34 per cent of total revolving credit commitments.

NEW PERSONAL FINANCE COMMITMENTS, JULY 1991
$ million

Type of commitment	*Banks*	*Finance companies*	*Credit cooperatives*	*Other lenders*	*All lenders*
Fixed loan	764	261	189	49	1,262
Revolving credit	508	97	13	7	625
Total commitments	*1,272*	*358*	*202*	*56*	*1,887*

As with business finance, the comparisons between June and July 1991 are affected to some extent by the fact that July was a five week reporting period for some banks whereas June was a four week reporting period.

For further information, order the publications Personal Finance, Australia *(5642.0),* Commercial Finance, Australia *(5643.0) and* Lease Finance, Australia *(5644.0), or contact Ms Abha Bedi on (06) 252 7117.*

Wine sales in brief ...

Using unadjusted data, total wine sales were 27.0 million litres in August, a decrease of 7.6 per cent on July 1991 and an increase of 6.1 per cent on August 1990.

In seasonally adjusted terms, total wine sales in August at 27.6 million litres, represents an increase of 11.6 per cent on July 1991.

The trend estimate of 25.7 million litres for total wine sales is a marginal increase of 0.2 per cent compared with July 1991.

For the first eight months of 1991, total wine sales were marginally above those for the corresponding period in 1990.

Source: Sales of Australian Wine and Brandy by Winemakers, August 1991 (8504.0).

Inquiries

The ABS supplies a wide range of statistical information:

- through its bookshops
- by mail order (including subscription)
- by facsimile
- electronically.

To order any of the publications that appear in *Statistics Weekly* or to inquire about the statistics and services available from the ABS, contact Information Services at any of the offices listed below. An Information Consultancy Service in each office provides assistance of a more extensive or complex nature.

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Suggestions

Any suggestions for improvement to this publication should be addressed to:

Robert Nixon
Editor
Statistics Weekly
(06) 252 6104

All the week's releases:
16 to 22 October

General

Publications Advice, 18 October 1991 (1105.0; free)

Publications Advice, 22 October 1991 (1105.0; free)

Statistics Weekly, 17 October 1991 (1318.0; $4.00)

Economic Indicators, Qld, October 1991 (1307.3; $6.00)

Tasmanian Statistical Indicators, October 1991 (1303.6; $9.00)

Canberra Statistical Area Summary, 1991 (1313.8; $10.00) — *new issue*

Demography

Estimated Resident Population by Age and Sex in Statistical Local Areas, Vic. — Data on Floppy Disk, June 1990 (3208.2; $70.00)

Age and Sex Distribution of Estimated Resident Population, Qld, 1990 (3224.3; $25.00) — *new issue*

Estimated Resident Population by Age and Sex in Statistical Local Areas, ACT, June 1990 (3207.8; $9.00)

National accounts, finance and foreign trade

Personal Finance, Aust., July 1991 (5642.0; $5.50)

Commercial Finance, Aust., July 1991 (5643.0; $5.50)

Lease Finance, Aust., July 1991 (5644.0; $5.50)

Assets of Superannuation Funds and Approved Deposit Funds, June Qtr 1991 (5656.0; $10.00)

Labour statistics and prices

The Labour Force, Aust., September 1991 (6203.0; $14.50)

Export Price Index, Aust., August 1991 (6405.0; $7.50)

Price Indexes of Materials Used in Coal Mining, Aust., August 1991 (6415.0; $10.00)

The Labour Force, Vic., August 1991 (6202.2; $14.50)

Labour Force, SA, August 1991 (6201.4; $14.50)

Agriculture

Summary of Crops, Aust., 1989–90 (7330.0; $25.00)

Livestock Products — Meat, Qld, August 1991 (7204.3; $4.50)

Secondary industry and distribution

Manufacturing Production, Aust.: Energy Products, August 1991 (8368.0; $4.50)

Building Activity, Aust., June Qtr 1991 (8752.0; $13.50)

Engineering Construction Activity, Aust., June Qtr 1991 (8762.0; $10.00) (*Previously:* Engineering Construction Survey, Aust.)

Building Activity, NSW, June Qtr 1991 (8752.1; $10.00)

Tourist Accommodation, Qld, June Qtr 1991 (8635.3; $14.50)

Building Activity, Qld, June Qtr 1991 (8752.3; $10.00)

Building Approvals — Private Sector, Perth Statistical Division, September 1991 (8732.5; $3.50)

Building Activity, Tas., June Qtr 1991 (8752.6; $8.00)

Building Activity, ACT, June Qtr 1991 (8752.8; $10.00)

Calendar of key releases

Expected releases over the fortnight to 5 November 1991

October

24

Housing Finance for Owner Occupation, Australia, August 1991 (5609.0; $10.00)

Registrations of New Motor Vehicles, Australia, September 1991, Preliminary (9301; $10.00)

28

Price Index of Materials Used in Building Other Than House Building, Eight Capital Cities, August 1991 (6407.0; $10.00)

Price Index of Materials Used in House Building, Six State Capital Cities and Canberra, August 1991 (6408.0; $7.50)

Price Indexes of Materials Used in Manufacturing Industries, Australia, August 1991 (6411.0; $10.00)

Manufacturing Production, Australia, September 1991, Preliminary (8301.0; $10.00)

30

Consumer Price Index, September Quarter 1991 (6401.0; $11.00)

Price Indexes of Articles Produced by Manufacturing Industry, Australia, August 1991 (6412.0; $10.00)

31

Balance of Payments, Australia, September 1991 (5301.0; $15.00)

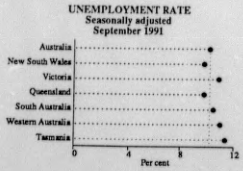
Building Approvals, Australia, September 1991 (8731.0; $12.50)

The latest ...

Changes to key State indicators — consolidated to 22 October 1991

	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
	— Percentage change from same period previous year —								
New capital expenditure (Mar. qtr 91)*	−8.4	−22.7	0	−8.9	−7.0	−16.9	n.a.	n.a.	−10.2
Retail turnover (Aug. 91) (trend estimate)	4.3	1.7	2.9	5.4	5.0	5.0	n.a.	9.6	3.7
New motor vehicle registrations (Aug. 91)† (a)	−3.1	−22.3	−11.2	−25.4	−15.3	−28.0	−27.9	19.3	−12.4
Number of dwelling unit approvals (Aug. 91)	8.6	−6.8	7.6	3.1	19.6	41.3	21.7	36.5	7.6
Value of total building work done (June qtr 91)	−8.3	−28.6	4.7	−11.4	−27.9	−0.5	39.9	18.1	−13.2
Employed persons (Sept. 91)*	−1.7	−3.8	−0.6	−2.6	−1.5	−1.9	1.9	1.0	−2.1
Capital city consumer price index (June qtr 91)	2.8	4.1	3.4	4.7	2.2	3.8	4.1	3.2	3.4
Average weekly earnings (full-time adult ordinary time) (May 91)	3.6	5.2	5.7	6.5	8.1	3.1	5.8	5.6	5.0
Population (Dec. 90)	1.1	1.3	2.3	1.1	2.2	1.1	1.2	2.5	1.5
Room nights in licensed hotels and motels, etc (Mar. qtr 91)	0.0	−1.9	−0.9	−6.4	−1.2	7.7	0.2	14.5	−0.5

* Seasonally adjusted except for NT and ACT. † Seasonally adjusted except for Tas., NT and ACT.
(a) Refer to footnote (e) on next page.



The latest ...

Key national indicators – consolidated to 22 October 1991

		Period	Latest figure available		Percentage change (a) on	
			Original	Seasonally adjusted	Previous period	Corresponding period last year
National production						
Gross domestic product — current prices	$m	June qtr 91	92,362	93,956	– 1.2	– 1.2
— *1984–85 prices*	"	"	*62,148*	*63,912*	*– 1.0*	*– 2.4*
Industrial activity						
New capital expenditure — current prices	$m	June qtr 91	6,304	6,011	– 8.9	– 13.4
— *1984–85 prices*	"	"	*4,808*	*4,577*	*– 8.2*	*– 13.4*
Expected new capital expenditure	"	Six months to Dec. 91	12,756	n.a.	n.a.	– 18.5
Retail turnover — current prices	"	Aug. 91	7,577.9	7,778.7	1.4	4.0
— *1984–85 prices*	"	*June qtr 91*	*14,569.4*	*15,058.0*	*– 1.0*	*– 2.2*
New motor vehicle registrations (e) (g)	no.	August 91	42,400	42,227	– 1.3	– 12.4
Dwelling unit approvals	"	August 91	12,287	11,883	1.2	10.2
Value of all building approvals	$m	"	1,789	1,700	– 14.5	– 8.4
Value of total building work done — current prices	"	June qtr 91	6,253	6,264	– 5.1	– 13.2
— *1984–85 prices*	"	"	*3,963*	*3,970*	*– 4.7*	*– 13.3*
Manufacturers' sales — current prices	"	June qtr 91	33,638	33,765	– 1.7	– 3.7
— *1984–85 prices*	"	"	*23,225*	*23,337*	*– 1.8*	*– 5.0*
Expected manufacturers' sales	"	Six months to Dec. 91	71,691	n.a.	n.a.	– 5.0
Labour						
Employed persons	'000	Sept. 91	7,762.8	7,705.2	– 0.3	– 2.1
Unemployment rate †	%	"	10.0	10.2	0.4	2.7
Participation rate †	"	"	63.7	63.4	0.0	– 0.5
Job vacancies	'000	Aug. 91	25.6	25.1	– 2.1	– 46.9
Average weekly overtime per employee	hours	"	1.07	1.11	– 1.0	– 12.2
Prices, profits and wages						
Consumer price index	1980–81 = 100.0	June qtr 91	214.4	n.a.	0.1	3.4
Price index of materials used in manufacturing industries	1984–85 = 100.0	July 91	120.4	n.a.	0.0	3.4
Price index of articles produced by manufacturing industry	1988-89 = 100.0	July 91	111.4	n.a.	0.2	2.6
Company profits before income tax	$m	June qtr 91	2,469	2,697	7.4	– 23.1
Average weekly earnings (Full-time adults; ordinary time)	$	May 91	560.80	n.a.	– 0.6	5.0
Interest rates (b) (monthly average)						
90-day bank bills †	% per annum	August 91	10.20	n.a.	0.10	– 3.55
10-year Treasury bonds †	"	"	10.65	n.a.	– 0.35	– 2.85
Balance of payments						
Exports of merchandise	$m	August 91	4,601	4,665	1.4	13.6
Imports of merchandise	"	"	3,979	3,715	– 12.3	– 10.2
Balance on merchandise trade (c)	"	"	622	950	160.3	n.a.
Balance of goods and services (c)	"	"	304	696	1,165.5	n.a.
Balance on current account (c)	"	"	– 925	– 575	47.0	60.5
Terms of trade (d)	1984–85 = 100.0	June qtr 91	n.a.	100.2	1.2	– 5.2
Foreign investment						
Net foreign debt (f)	$m	30 June 91	130,314	n.a.	– 2.4	2.9
Net foreign liabilities (f)	"	"	176,625	n.a.	1.6	6.6
Exchange rates (monthly average)						
$US	per $A	August 91	0.7824	n.a.	1.5	– 3.3
Trade weighted index	May 1970 =100.0	"	60.4	n.a.	0.7	– 1.6
Other indicators						
Population (resident at end of qtr)	million	Mar. 91	17.3	n.a.	0.4	1.5
Overseas visitor arrivals	'000	May 91	161	204	10.8	6.4

(a) Based on seasonally adjusted figures where available. (b) *Source*: Reserve Bank of Australia. (c) For percentage changes, a minus sign indicates an increase in the deficit; no sign means a decrease in the deficit or an increase in the surplus. (d) The ratio of the price of goods and services for exports to that for imports. (e) August 1991 is not strictly comparable with August 1990 due to the introduction by motor vehicle registration authorities of a more accurate identification and classification system. (f) Later figures expected to be released Wednesday, 23 October 1991. (g) Later figures expected to be released Thursday, 24 October 1991.

NOTES: † = change is shown in terms of percentage points. n.a. = not available.

Figures have been taken from a variety of ABS publications. Copies may be obtained from Information Services (see page 6).

Some of the figures shown are preliminary, some final, and some are revisions of previously published figures. Users should check the latest relevant publication or with the ABS Information Services if the status of the statistic is important.

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